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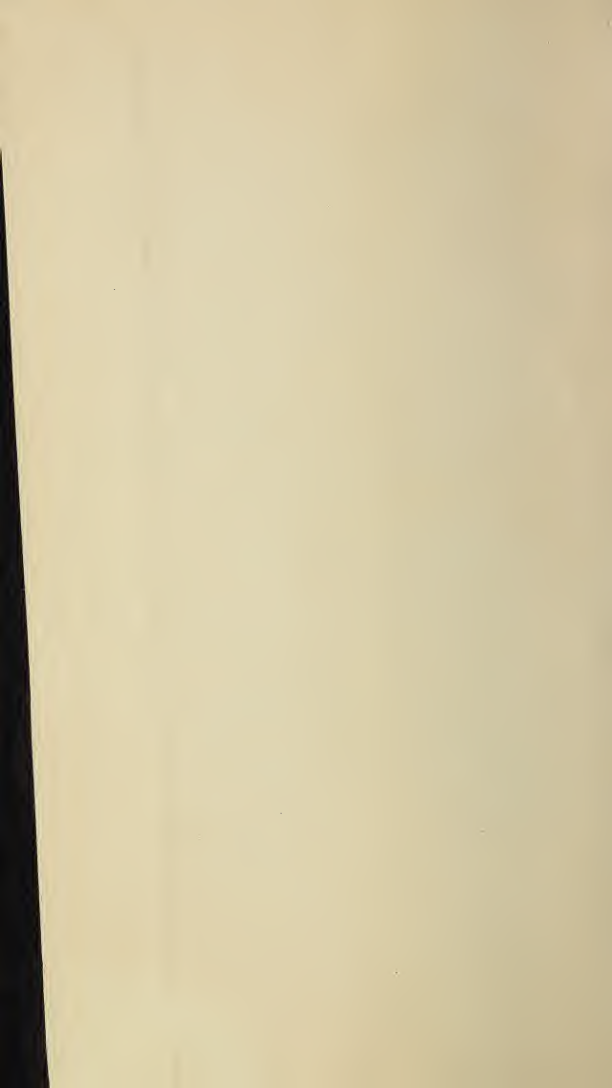
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HISTORY

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HISTORY, &c.

CHAPTER I.

John Chrysostom—Affairs of the Eastern Church to the end of the Fifth Century.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM was born at Antioch, about the year 354. His parents were persons of quality ; his father died while he was a little boy. His mother was a pious woman, and had him educated with care. He became very eloquent, and for a while gave himself to the practice of law. But he soon found that the wisdom of this world could not fill his mind. The Spirit of God led him to the study of the Holy Scriptures. And he was taught by Diodorus, afterwards bishop of Tarsus, to leave the fanciful notions of Origen,* and study

* See "Stories of the Second and Third Centuries," published by the American S. S. Union.

the plain sense of the word of God. Chrysostom lived for some time the life of a monk, contrary to the entreaties of his pious mother. But after a while, Flavian, bishop of Antioch, appointed him to the office of presbyter in his church. In the year 379 the people of Antioch raised a tumult about their taxes. They dragged the statues of the emperor Theodosius and his family about the streets. But, when they found that they were in danger of being punished, they were in great distress. The church at Antioch had once been renowned for its Christian graces. But luxury and the love of the world now prevailed. There were about two hundred thousand inhabitants in this great city; half of whom were Christians. They expected the wrath of the emperor would be poured upon them with fury. John improved the opportunity to exhort them to repentance. He compared the awful suspense in which they were held, to the expectation of the day of judgment. Prayers were made in the church that God would move the heart of the emperor to forgive them; and a great many people, who had never been to church before, but spent their time in the

theatre, now came to the house of God. Flavian, the bishop, went to Constantinople to persuade Theodosius to forgive the people. Libanius, the sophist, also went to the emperor for the same purpose. But most of the philosophers hid themselves, in time of danger. The monks, however, left their places of retirement, and flocked into the city. There they entreated the magistrates to be merciful to the people. The severe proceedings of the courts moved the heart of Chrysostom. He saw wives and children pleading in vain with the magistrates to save the lives of their husbands and fathers. In his preaching he brought these things before his people, and showed them how awful would be the case of the impenitent in the day of judgment. Then, no mother, sister, or father can stop the course of divine justice. But after Flavian went away, the monks and clergy prevailed upon the magistrates to stop their proceedings, till they should hear from the emperor. When Flavian laid the matter before Theodosius, the emperor told him how unreasonable and ungrateful the people of Antioch were; for he had always been doing them good. Flavian

confessed that what the emperor said was all true ; but told him if he would not forgive the people, God would not forgive him. Theodosius at length owned, that if the Lord Jesus, for our sakes, suffered death, and forgave and prayed for his murderers, he ought to forgive his fellow creatures who had offended him. With great tenderness, therefore, he told the bishop to make haste back, and relieve the fears of the people. He returned, and informed them that the city was restored to the emperor's favour. This circumstance shows the power of Christian principle. If Theodosius had been a Pagan the sword would have been let loose upon the people of Antioch, and they would have paid for their rebellion with their blood. But the spirit of forgiveness inculcated in the gospel, had softened the emperor's heart.

The benevolence of the gospel is also manifest in the exertions and prayers of the clergy and monks, to save the lives of the people. In the year 398 Chrysostom was appointed bishop of Constantinople. He immediately began to reform abuses which had crept into the church. He put a stop to many scandalous practices among the clergy, and would not suffer those

ministers to preach who would not amend their lives. The bishops of the large cities had introduced a pompous and expensive style of living. He reduced the expenses of the bishops' table, and gave what he saved by this means to the poor. He urged the common people, who were employed during the week in the day time, to attend church in the evening. He spoke to their consciences severely and faithfully, and they heard him gladly. Some of those who had separated from the general church also heard him preach, and he reclaimed many heretics. Constantinople had long suffered under Arian impiety. The discipline of the church had become loose, and much corruption and many evil practices prevailed. A great reformation took place under his labours. He preached three times a week, and sometimes every day. Those who had before attended the theatre and public shows, now came in great numbers to public worship. The crowd was so great, that he was obliged to place himself in the middle of the house of worship, in order to be heard. He also reformed the churches of the neighbouring provinces of Thrace, Asia, and Pontus. Several

profligate bishops in these countries were by his means deprived of their offices. He also made great efforts to spread the gospel among the heathen. In addition to all these labours, he built a large hospital for the weak and feeble, who were unable to support themselves, and placed it under excellent regulations.

Here we see the enlarged benevolence of the gospel, and its superiority over every false religion. There is not a single instance in all the history of Paganism, where any such provision has been made for the poor. None of the ancient philosophers were ever known to be employed in relieving the wants of the lower classes of people. But true religion visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

In every age the faithful ministers of the gospel, who speak the truth without fear, have met with opposition and persecution. The clergy of Constantinople were indolent and corrupt. They could not bear Chrysostom's reproofs. Therefore, like the Pharisees in the days of our Lord, they opposed him with all their might, and watched every opportunity to find something against him. The wealthy and the great were also offended at

the plainness of his preaching. The discipline of the church had become so loose, that all sorts of characters were admitted to the Lord's Supper. The government interfered so much with the affairs of the church, that he could not restore the old discipline. But he preached repentance with great zeal and energy; and his enemies stirred up a persecution against him. A council, or assembly of ministers, was held, under the direction of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria. He was one of the worst of men, and the determined enemy of Chrysostom. The synod, with great injustice, condemned the bishop. Their proceedings were supported by the empress Eudoxia, who was a proud and tyrannical woman. The bishops who were friendly to Chrysostom, were at this time with him in the great room of the bishop's house. He exhorted them to be earnest in prayer. He told them as they loved the Lord Jesus, not to desert their churches for his sake. He said, with the apostle Paul, "I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand!" "I see," said he, "I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life."

His friends were filled with sorrow. He entreated them not to mourn for him; "for," said he, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." One of the company, with much feeling, lamented over the desolations of the church. He answered, "Brother, it is enough. Pursue the argument no further; but, as I requested, desert not your churches. As for the doctrine of Christ, it did not begin with me, and it shall not die with me. When Moses died, did not Joshua take his place? Paul was beheaded, but he left Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and many more behind him." Eulysius, bishop of Apamea, told him that if they kept their churches, they should be compelled to subscribe to the decrees of the council, and communicate, or partake of the Lord's Supper, with those who had condemned him. He told them they might communicate, to prevent divisions in the church; but they ought not to sign the decrees, for he had done nothing for which he deserved to be deprived of his office.

Theophilus assumed a power in this matter, which did not belong to him. Chrysostom said, that it was not the business of a man

who lived in Egypt to judge one that lived in Thrace. He would not, therefore, own the authority of the council. But the synod took away his office for disobeying them. And, in order to support their measures against him, they accused him of calling the empress Jezebel. Eudoxia was very much like the wicked wife of Ahab, in her pride and cruelty. It is very likely that Chrysostom had called her so.

But the people of Constantinople sincerely loved the bishop. They were very much excited, and insisted that he should be heard by impartial judges. Chrysostom was afraid there would be a tumult among the people. So he gave himself up secretly to the officer who was sent to take him. He was immediately carried off in a ship. As soon as it was known that he was gone, the whole city was in an uproar. The tumult became exceedingly violent. Eudoxia was frightened at the danger. She urged her husband to send for the bishop to come back. She also wrote to Chrysostom, expressing her sorrow and respect. He was therefore restored to the church.

But he was not suffered to remain long in peace. A silver statue, or image of the empress, was set up in the street before the great church. Many heathenish ceremonies were used at its dedication. The people also met there, upon the Lord's day, and spent their time in sports and plays, to the great disturbance of the congregation. The bishop's principal fault was ill temper. His impatience at these things led him into great imprudence. He began a sermon with these words: "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed; again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger." This gave the enemies of Chrysostom all the advantage which they desired. They again accused him of treason, and persuaded the emperor, Arcadius, who was a weak man, to take away the bishop's office. He was put in prison; his friends and followers were scattered abroad, killed, or imprisoned. All who would not renounce communion with the bishop, were threatened with severe punishment. It was Easter when the ordinance of baptism was to be administered. The friends of Chrysostom fled into the fields, to hold their meetings there. The emperor

went out that day, and saw a meadow near the city, covered with white. About three thousand persons, who had been baptized the night before, were assembled there. Arcadius ordered a party of soldiers to drive them away. Several ladies of quality were very badly treated, and numbers were imprisoned and whipped. At length Chrysostom was ordered to leave the city. Before he went away, he charged the deaconesses to continue their care of the church. He also told his people to communicate with the bishop who should be chosen in his place.

Arsacius was chosen bishop. Notwithstanding the advice of Chrysostom, his friends refused to submit to the new bishop, and formed separate assemblies. They were for a long time severely persecuted under the name of Joannites. Among them was a rich lady, called Olympias. She had profited much by the ministry of Chrysostom, and had been a deaconess in the church. She was now banished to Nicomedia, and lived there many years, an example of piety; and supplied the bishop with money in his exile.

Chrysostom was sent to Caucasus, in Arme-

nia. This was a barren cold region, full of robbers. Paul, a godly bishop of Constantinople, who was banished to that place by Constantius, had been murdered there. He endured many hardships on his journey. He was however attended by a number of Christian friends, who sympathized with him in his trials, and paid him every attention. At Caucasus he met with very generous treatment. He preached the gospel there, and the people heard him gladly. While he was there, the country was visited with a dreadful famine, which caused great distress among the people. Olympias gave him money to relieve the poor. He also redeemed many persons who had been carried off by the robbers. He made great exertions, also, to spread the gospel among the Pagans in Phœnicia, and furnished money for building places of worship there. Arsacius died in the year 405, and Atticus was chosen bishop of Constantinople. The Joannites were still persecuted. Chrysostom was obliged to go from one place to another, to shun the robbers. In the third year of his banishment he was exposed to famine, pestilence, and the swords of the robbers ; so that

his life was in danger every day. But he was respected wherever he went. His enemies envied him even this little comfort, and procured an order for him to be removed to a desolate and solitary spot on the shore of the Black Sea. His health had suffered severely by the incredible hardships which he had endured. While on the way, he asked his guards to let him rest. But they had all along treated him with brutality, and now refused his request. He had not, however, gone far, before he was so sick that they had to bring him back. He then received the Lord's Supper, sung his usual doxology, "Glory be to God for all events;" and fell asleep in Jesus.

The Joannites continued to meet separately, till the year 438. At that time Proclus was appointed bishop. He made an address in praise of Chrysostom, and persuaded the emperor Theodosius II. to have his body removed to Constantinople. This healed the division, and the Joannites returned to the church.

Chrysostom was a man of great learning, genius, and eloquence. He possessed a solid understanding, regulated by a fervent piety.

He was generous and liberal. He sympathized with distress of every kind. His temper was open and frank, though sometimes excessively violent. He was a determined enemy to vice; and he sought out and reproved sin in every condition in life. He laboured much in explaining the scriptures; and he held the truth in greater purity than most men of the age in which he lived. Particularly, he held the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone, as the foundation of his religion. He wrote many valuable works. His practical writings are excellent. He had lived in two great cities, where every kind of vice prevailed. He therefore had an opportunity of observing the effect of various practices upon the morals of the people. He speaks with great severity, and with justice, against the amusements of the theatre, shows, balls, and plays, as destructive to all good morals. Young people cannot guard too much against the temptations which attend such amusements.

The treatment which this great man received shows how true, in all ages, is the saying of the apostle Paul; "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

The whole Roman empire had become Christians. Idolatry was prohibited under severe penalties. The profession of the gospel had become exceedingly honourable. The emperor supported the church, in great pomp and splendour. Yet this great and holy man was slandered and abused, expelled from his charge, banished, and murdered, by the united efforts of the emperor, his court and nobility, the clergy of the city, and the bishops of other places. Why did they do this? Evidently because they hated the purity of his doctrine, and could not bear his reproofs.

At this time, Christianity prevailed to a considerable extent in Persia. Maruthas, bishop of Mesopotamia, had gained the favour of the king of Persia, and almost persuaded him to be a Christian. But, some time after, Audas, a bishop, destroyed a temple where the Persians worshipped the fire. The idolatrous priests complained to Isdegerdes, the emperor. He sent for the bishop, very mildly complained to him of the injustice of the action, and ordered him to rebuild the temple. Audas refused to obey the emperor. The conduct of the bishop was most unjustifiable. It was

an intemperate zeal that led him to destroy the temple. It was also a very imprudent act, and contrary to the spirit of true religion. The king was greatly enraged at the bishop. He had not knowledge enough of the principles of Christianity to see that Audas acted contrary to them. All the Christians in the country were therefore held accountable for this man's imprudence. Isdegerdes ordered all the Christian churches in his dominions to be destroyed. This laid the foundation for a cruel persecution, which lasted thirty years. The chiefs of the Saracens were ordered to guard the roads and take all the Christians that passed, to prevent them from escaping to the Romans. Aspebetes, one of these chiefs, was touched with compassion at their distress, and helped them to escape. He was accused of this, before the king; and with his family and a number of Arabs, fled to the Romans. These all embraced Christianity, were baptized, and joined the church.

The Christians of Persia sent to Theodosius II. entreating him to help them in their distress. The king of Persia also sent to demand of the emperor, the Christians who had

escaped to the Romans. Theodosius refused to give them up, and a war broke out between them. In this way Theodosius gained the advantage. But Acacius, the bishop of Amida, near Persia, did more, by one Christian action, to disarm the rage of the angry monarch than was done by all the arms of the emperor. The Romans had taken seven thousand prisoners and would not give them up to the Persians. They were starving to death for want of provisions. The Christian benevolence of Acacius was touched with their distress. He called his clergy together and told them that God had no need of either dishes or cups. But the people had given the church a great many gold and silver vessels, "Let us," said he, "by means of them, free and relieve these captive soldiers." He melted the vessels and paid the ransom of the Persians to the Roman soldiers. He also gave the captives provisions and necessaries for their journey, and sent them home to their king. Isdegerdes sent for the bishop and acknowledged to him his obligation. By this he was convinced that all the Christians were not like the bishop, who had offended him.

Theodosius II. began to reign when he was eight years of age, and reigned forty-one years. He possessed but little capacity for managing the affairs of government. But his sister Pulcheria, two years older than himself, was a woman of great abilities. By meekness and discretion she maintained such an influence over him, as enabled her to direct the affairs of government.

At the age of sixteen, she took the title of *Augusta*. By her prudence in preserving her brother's honour, she governed in his name with great success. She taught her brother to pray frequently; to honour the ministers; and to guard against new things in religion. He used to rise early, to sing the praises of God with his sisters. He had much of the Scriptures by heart, and could talk of them with the bishops like an aged minister. He collected and preserved them with great care. He completed the destruction of the heathen temples and idolatrous worship. He was very meek; and took great delight in forgiving those who had injured him.

During the reign of Theodosius, a Jew of Crete pretended that he was Moses. He told

the Jews who lived in that place, that he had been sent from heaven to take care of them and to take them over the sea. He preached a whole year in the island and persuaded many to follow him. He led them to the top of a high bank, and ordered them to throw themselves into the sea. They believed he would preserve them, as Moses did the children of Israel in the Red Sea. Those who were at the edge of the bank jumped down. Many of them were dashed in pieces by the rocks, and others were saved by some fishermen who were there. Those who remained on the bank took warning and tried to find the impostor to destroy him; but he had escaped. This shows the truth of the scripture which says, "Blindness has happened to Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Many of the Jews of Crete were, by this circumstance, convinced of their error, and embraced Christianity.

Theodosius died in the year 450. The whole eastern empire was left to his sister Pulcheria. She married Marcian and made him emperor. He was a man of sincere and

devoted piety, and Pulcheria maintained her religious character till death.

The efforts of this prince were chiefly directed towards the preservation of the truth, the encouragement of good morals, and the destruction of idolatry.

QUESTIONS.—What can you relate of the early life of Chrysostom? How did he live for some time after he became a Christian? To what office was he appointed by Flavian? What can you relate respecting the tumult at Antioch? To what office was Chrysostom appointed in the year 398? What did he do for the poor and infirm? What was the character of the clergy of Constantinople? How did they treat Chrysostom? How did the wealthy and the great receive his preaching? What did his enemies do? How did Chrysostom feel, under this treatment? What advice did he give the bishops who were his friends? What did he do to prevent a tumult? What effect did his banishment produce at Constantinople? What did Eudoxia do, to quiet the people? What did Chrysostom do when he returned? What happened to Chrysostom

and his friends in consequence of his imprudence? Where was Chrysostom sent? What did he do there? How was he treated by his guards? What did he do just before he died? How long did the friends of Chrysostom continue to meet separately? How were they finally united to the church? What was the character of Chrysostom? Why was he persecuted? What circumstances led to the persecution of Christians in Persia? What led to the war between the king of Persia and the emperor Theodosius II.? What disarmed the rage of the Persian king? How old was Theodosius II. when he began to reign? What was his character? What was the character of his sister Pulcheria? What did she do? What happened in Crete during the reign of Theodosius? What did Pulcheria do after the death of her brother? What was the character of Marcian?

CHAPTER II.

Private Life of Augustine—He is appointed Presbyter, and afterwards Bishop of Hippo.

THE following account of the private life of Augustine, is prepared from his own writings. In the commencement he asks, who shall inform him of the sins of his infancy; for even the infant one day old is not clear from sin, in the sight of God. He says he has seen an infant who could not speak, full of envy, and pale with anger. He recollects that in his early childhood he begged with tears for things which would have been hurtful to him; and expressed great indignation against his parents when they refused to gratify him. He acknowledged, also, that there was no time when he was innocent. He goes on to confess the sins which he committed in childhood, by

disobeying his parents and teachers. This he looks upon as a great sin, and mourns over it with bitterness of spirit. When he was a boy he was taken with a violent pain, so that his life was in danger. In this situation, he was in great distress of mind, but he got well suddenly, and soon forgot his serious thoughts. This is often the case with children. Something alarms them and they think seriously, for a while, about God and eternity. But soon they forget their serious thoughts, grieve away the Holy Spirit, and return again to their childish vanities. He says that he was indolent in his childhood, and improved in learning only as he was compelled. The only method taken to make him learn was to excite his ambition. Worldly ambition is too often the only motive placed before children and youth, to improve the mind. Young people ought to study to prepare themselves for usefulness; so that when they grow up, they may labour in the vineyard of the Lord, and glorify God by doing good to their fellow creatures. Augustine confesses that his youthful mind was disordered by sin; that he often

deceived his parents and teachers, by falsehood, and spent the time when he ought to have been at his study, in play and vain amusements. He would take things secretly from his parents to gratify a foolish appetite, or to give to his companions. He would likewise deceive his play fellows, and obtain victories by fraud. If he discovered this conduct in others, he would accuse them as dishonest; but if detected himself, it only made him rage. Such conduct is very common among children; yet, few people are disposed to look upon it as very sinful. It is passed over as childish folly. But this holy man wept over it, with the deepest self-abasement, as the evidence of the entire depravity of the natural heart. A great many children take things from their parents without leave. Yet they would not like to be called thieves. But the child who steals from its parent, breaks both the fifth and eighth commandments. Hear what Augustine says respecting these things, "Change the scene only from scholars and masters, from nuts and balls and sparrows, to governors, kings, gold, and estates, and you see the vices

of men, just as heavier punishments follow after the chastisements of the school-boy."

Augustine's father was a man in moderate circumstances. But he thought much of his son, and sent him to Carthage, at great expense, to complete his education. He was intemperate and vicious in his habits, thought little about God, and felt no anxiety about the moral and religious character of his son. But his mother was a pious woman. She felt a great concern for her son, and seriously warned him against the indulgence of his vicious inclination. Yet, he, like many thoughtless youth, despised her admonitions, as the fears of a weak woman; and they made no impression on his mind. He gave himself up to vicious practices, and was ashamed to be thought less wicked than his companions. To show his love of sin he relates an affair in which he was engaged while at home during vacation. There was a pear tree, which stood near his father's garden loaded with fruit. In the dead of night, he went, in company with some wicked boys, and stole all the fruit. He did not want the pears to eat, for his father

had plenty of better fruit. Most of them he threw to the hogs. So that he was influenced, in this action, by the love of sinning. Augustine looked with the deepest abhorrence upon this act, and considered it the height of impiety and wickedness. Some boys who would be greatly offended if they were called thieves, will take fruit wherever they can find it, and think it no harm. But this holy man considered this act of his as a real *theft*, deserving the punishment of the law. After relating his actual transgressions, he confesses himself really guilty, in the sight of God, of all those wicked deeds which God kept him from committing. He had seen so much of the corruption of his own heart, that he felt himself by nature, capable of committing all manner of wickedness. This may seem strange to those who have never discovered the moral pollution of the natural heart. But true Christians, who have been taught by the Holy Spirit, to look upon themselves in the light of God's word, will see that it is only the restraining grace of God, which has kept them back from plunging headlong into bold and daring wickedness. So deeply was Augustine impressed with this

subject, that he cries out, “ Who can unfold to me the intricacies of this knot of wickedness? It is filthy; I will no more pry into it; I will not see it !”

At the age of sixteen years, with no principle to guide him, Augustine went to the corrupt city of Carthage. Here he was surrounded by every enticement which could ensnare an unwary youth. He was hurried away by the amusements of the theatre. The arts of the forum, or public court, engaged his ambition. Those who practised there, considered it no dishonour to stoop to fraud and cunning to gain their causes. Augustine studied the books of eloquence, with the most ardent desire after fame. In the course of his study, he met with a book written by Cicero, which contains an exhortation to the study of philosophy. This book produced a remarkable change in his views. He suddenly gave up the hope of gaining a reputation by eloquence, and felt a strong thirst after wisdom. He was now nineteen years old. His father had died two years before, and his mother supported him at Carthage. He determined seriously to seek for wisdom. He had not entirely forgotten the

instructions of his pious mother. Although filled with delight in reading the volume of Cicero, yet the name of Christ was not there. He determined to give himself up to the study of the Holy Scriptures, to seek what they were. But the natural mind receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. So it was with Augustine. He saw no beauty in the Scriptures; and thought they were not worthy to be compared with the work of the heathen philosopher which he had been reading. He could not enter into their meaning, because the eyes of his mind were darkened by sin, and he could not understand spiritual things. It is only those who read the Bible with the humble confidence of a little child, who will learn the truth. But he was proud, and thought he possessed manly wisdom already.

In this state of mind he fell in with the Manichees. This sect had only the name of Christians. Their sentiments were a mixture of some of the doctrines of Christianity, with the ancient philosophy of the Persians. But all this time, while Augustine was wandering in spiritual darkness, his mother was praying

for him. She was more anxious about the situation of his soul, than most parents are about the lives of their children. For many years she persevered in incessant prayer. She also tried to persuade a certain bishop to reason him out of his errors. He replied, that her son was too proud to be convinced by argument. He advised her to let him alone, but to continue in prayer for him. He told her that in the course of his study he would discover his error, as he had done himself, after reading nearly all their books. But this did not satisfy the anxious parent. She entreated him with floods of tears, to comply with her request. He was a little out of patience and said to her "Be gone, good woman; it is not possible that a child of such tears should perish." This answer seemed to impress her mind like a voice from heaven.

Augustine supported himself by teaching rhetoric in his native town. He maintained an intimate friendship with a young man who had been his school-fellow and companion from infancy. He acknowledges that there is no true friendship except that which is cemented by the love of God. But they pursued

similar studies, and were strongly attached to each other. The young man had been a believer of the true faith, but was not a Christian. Augustine drew him over to his sentiments. But the young man was taken sick with a fever. Contrary to the expectation of all, he recovered. As soon as Augustine had an opportunity of talking with him, he undertook to ridicule Christian baptism. But his friend had learned that the doctrine of the Manichees would afford him no comfort in the dreadful hour of death. He dreaded the person who had deceived him, as the enemy of his soul. With great freedom, he told Augustine that, if he would be his friend, he must not say any more upon that subject. Augustine was confounded at this, and thought he would say no more to him, till he should be thoroughly recovered. But in a few days the fever returned, and the young man died. Augustine had placed his happiness in this friend. When he was removed from him he knew not where to look for comfort. The God of the Manichees was but a vain imagination. It furnished no object for the affections. I would explain to my young readers their notion of God, if I

thought they could understand it. But it was very confused, and I can hardly form an idea of it myself. He had no knowledge of the true God, who alone can fill the immortal soul. He thus describes his feelings, on this occasion: "How miserable was my life! My country was a punishment. My father's house gave me no comfort. What I had enjoyed with my friend, was torment without him. If I said, hope in God, my soul refused; for the God I worshipped was not an object upon which I could fix my hopes. I was wretched; and so is every one that is bound up in the friendship of mortals. If I attempted to throw my burden upon the false God of the Manichees, it returned upon myself, as I found nothing that would support it."

In this state of mind he left his country, and went to Carthage. In the twenty-ninth year of his age, Augustine went to Rome. Worldly motives alone influenced him in changing his place of residence. But he confesses that the hand of the Lord was in it. His mother was not permitted to see the gracious design of God in removing her son from her. She was unwilling he should go, wept

over him, and held him close, intending either to prevent him from going, or to go with him herself. So strong is a mother's love, even towards an undutiful child ! If children knew the secret anguish of a mother's heart, when they are proud and stubborn, they would never grieve her again. But so hardened was Augustine's heart, that he deceived such a mother ! He pretended that he was only going to see a friend set sail, and persuaded her to remain where she was until he returned. But that night he got on board a ship, and went away privately. She spent the night in weeping and praying, that God would hinder her son from sailing. But the Lord did not hear her prayer in this particular. He designed to make the very circumstance which she dreaded, the means of his conversion. In the morning, when she found he was gone, she was distracted with grief, and gave vent to her feelings in groans and complaints before God. In this matter she ought to have exercised more confidence, and submission to God. It is often the case in affairs like this, that the very thing we desire would be hurtful to us. The Lord sees what is best, and we ought to

be willing that he should do as he pleases. But in asking for things which we know are agreeable to his will, as the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the salvation of souls, we have a right to believe and expect that he will answer our prayers. In this matter we shall see that, by refusing the particular object of her wishes, the Lord brought about the event for which she had so long prayed, and which was the greatest burden of all her desires. She, however, became calm, went home, and returned to her employment of praying for him.

After Augustine arrived at Rome, he was taken sick with a fever. His life was in great danger. He says, "I drew nigh to hell, carrying the load of all my sins." His mother, ignorant of his situation, prayed for him continually; and the salvation of her son was the constant burden of her petitions. But the Lord removed the fever from him, for he had a great work for him to perform. Augustine acknowledges that the hand of the Lord directed all his ways, though he was far from him and knew it not.

At this time he received the appointment

of professor of rhetoric in the city of Milan. Here he visited Ambrose, the venerable and pious bishop of that city. The man of God received him like a father, and by his kindness gained his affections. So strongly was Augustine prejudiced against the truth, that he cared nothing for the sentiments of the bishop. But he attended his lectures just for the sake of hearing him speak, for he was very eloquent. He was delighted with the sweetness of his language, but paid no attention to the doctrines he preached; for he despaired of finding the way to God. But as he afterwards thought of the words that pleased him, the ideas came into his mind. In this way, he was gradually brought to examine the doctrines preached by Ambrose. He began to think it possible for him to find the truth in the church of Christ. He gave up his Manichean notions, and became a catechumen, or candidate for baptism, under the instruction of Ambrose.

Augustine's mother came to him at Milan. Such was her love for her ungrateful son, that she followed him by sea and by land. She

found him very hopeless about ever discovering the truth. Yet she told him that she believed in Christ, that before she left this world, she should see him a sound believer.

Ambrose was so constantly engaged in the duties of his office, that Augustine could get no opportunity of telling him the state of his mind. The bishop was continually surrounded with crowds of persons, whose necessities he relieved. The little time which he could get to himself was spent either in study, or in refreshing himself. But Augustine heard him preach every Sabbath, and profited by his sermons. From these he discovered that he had not understood the doctrines of the church; and that he had been imposed upon by the falsehood and delusions of the Manichees. Yet his former errors made him cautious, and even sceptical. He wanted the fullest evidence before he could believe. "By faith," says he, "I might have been healed. But having had a bad physician, I now dreaded a good one. By believing alone I could be cured; yet, for fear of believing false things, I refused to be healed." At length the Spirit of God led him to see how this principle of

faith enters into all the business of life. He considered what credit he gave to his friends, physicians, and many others. The truth of the Holy Scriptures had been established by the testimony of a large number of credible witnesses, and confirmed by the great authority which they had obtained throughout the world. He therefore concluded that it was unreasonable obstinacy to disbelieve them. Amidst all the wanderings of his mind, he had preserved a belief in a God, and his providence in directing the affairs of men. He had become convinced that no truth could be discovered by the weak light of human reason; and therefore mankind need a revelation of God's will from himself.

From these considerations, he came to the conclusion, that the Lord would never have suffered the Scriptures to obtain such high authority and influence in the world, in his own name, if they had not been the appointed means of knowing his will. He saw also the folly of disbelieving the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures, because some of them are beyond our comprehension. This is rather an evidence of their truth, because there are

few things relating to an infinite being which can be fully understood by his short-sighted creatures.

In this state of mind, while his heart was yet unrenewed, he was thirsting after the honours, and profits, and pleasures of this world. He was preparing an oration in praise of the emperor, in which he knew there were many falsehoods. Yet he expected praise even from those who knew them to be such. As he was passing along the street, in great anxiety, he saw a poor beggar, who was merry, and seemed to have no trouble. He sighed, and told his friend, that all the labour and toil and vexation which they were enduring, was only to obtain what this poor beggar possessed. His happiness indeed was not real, neither was their's. When they had obtained the object of their wishes, their gratification was only momentary, like that of the beggar, whose belly was full of meat. "He," says Augustine, "was merry, I was full of anxiety; he was at his ease, I was full of fear." If he could choose between his own state of mind and that of the beggar, he would at once prefer the beggar's. Yet if he were asked whe-

ther he would be Augustine or the beggar, he would say Augustine. He found himself miserable; he grieved, and doubled his misery. And if any brighter prospect appeared before him, it flew away before he could lay hold of it.

Augustine's most intimate friends were Alypius and Nebridius. Alypius was his townsman, and had studied under him at Tagasta, his native place. He became extravagantly fond of the fashionable games practised there. Augustine was vexed to see him indulge a taste so destructive to all sobriety and prudence in youth. While he was lecturing at Carthage, he made an allusion to these games, to illustrate his subject. In the course of his remarks he severely censured those who practised these follies. He did not think of Alypius when he spoke; but the Spirit of the Lord sent it home with deep conviction to his heart. He forsook the foolish games, and loved his friend the more. But, with his teacher, he was deceived by the Manichean heresy. He afterwards went to Rome to learn the law. There the sports of the gladiators were exhibited; in these sports men fought

for prizes, and the people looked on with barbarous pleasure. Some of Alypius' friends carried him by force to these exhibitions. He declared, with much confidence, that he would never look on them. For a while he shut his eyes with great resolution. But at length the whole house rang with shouting. He was overcome by curiosity, and opened his eyes. He saw a man wounded, and the sight of the blood filled him with savage pleasure; he gazed and shouted with the rest, and was carried away with a love of these scenes of cruelty; he repeated his visits, and became more fond of them than those who had dragged him there against his will. This is a solemn warning to young people not to indulge a self-confident spirit, and to avoid temptation. We are kept from running into gross and open wickedness, only by the restraining influences of the Spirit of God. It is dangerous, therefore, to tempt the Spirit, by trusting in our own strength and exposing ourselves to temptation. Augustine found Alypius at Rome. With him he removed to Milan, where he practised law with uncommon integrity. Nebridius left a

good estate at Carthage, for the sake of enjoying Augustine's company. These three friends were all in the same state of darkness and doubt about religion. But the Lord was leading them in the way that they knew not. Augustine now began to look back, and see how long he had been in search of true wisdom, with a determination to give up his worldly pursuits if he found it. He had begun at nineteen, and was now, in his thirtieth year, still anxious and miserable. His conscience told him to set apart some time every day, to attend to the concerns of his soul.

After remaining a long time in doubt, and experiencing many trials of mind, he was led to seek for salvation in Jesus Christ. But his views of the Saviour were yet low; as he esteemed him only as a man of unequalled wisdom. Of course, he could not have had any clear views of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and his soul was still held in bondage. He was puffed up with pride, and talked of these things like a man of experience. But he was a stranger to humility and the love of Christ. At length, he took up

the Bible with great eagerness ; he read the epistles of Paul with feelings different from what he had ever before experienced.

He was now confirmed in his views of Christian doctrine ; but his heart was not changed. He approved the Saviour, but did not like the narrow way which leads to life. He now sought the instructions of Simplician, an aged and experienced Christian minister. This venerable man had been the means of directing Ambrose to those high views of vital piety, which distinguished him from the corrupt bishops of the age. The Lord was also pleased to make use of him to inspire Augustine with the same sentiments. He explained to Simplician the state of his mind. After giving him some advice, the aged minister related to him an account of the conversion of Victorinus. This man, like Augustine, had been a teacher of rhetoric. He was a man of great learning, and had taught many Roman senators. He had been a magistrate, and was honoured with a statue, on account of his great public services. Even to old age he was a worshipper of idols. He partook of all the

heathenish rites of the Roman nobility, and defended the monstrous and absurd notions of the common people. But, in his old age, he gave himself up to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and the writings of Christians, and made a profession of religion.

When Augustine heard this account, he felt a desire to imitate the Roman nobleman. The reader, who has read our "Stories of the Church in the Fourth Century," will recollect that Julian made a law forbidding Christians to teach classical learning. Victorinus had long held the office of professor of rhetoric at Rome. Simplician informed Augustine, that when this law was made, Victorinus gave up his office, rather than sacrifice to idols. As Augustine followed the same profession, he felt a desire to give it up also. But he had great conflicts of mind; he felt himself still chained to the world, and he knew not how to give it up. He did not feel quite ready, and wanted to put it off, just as all impenitent sinners do.

His anxiety and distress of mind increased. On a certain occasion, Politian, a townsman

of his, came to visit him and Alypius. As they sat down to talk, Politian saw a book upon the table before them. He opened it, and to his great surprise, found it to be the Epistles of Paul. He told Augustine that he was pleased with his taste. Augustine replied, that he now read these epistles with great interest. Politian then told them about Anthony, the Monk,* and informed them of a great many monasteries. They had never heard of a monastery before, although there was one at Milan, under the care of Ambrose. Politian also told them of two of his companions, who had suddenly given themselves up to God, and entered into a monastery. Augustine felt confounded at this; for he had been twelve years seeking wisdom, and yet was unable to withdraw his affections from the world.† “What is

* See Stories of the Church in the Fourth Century, published by the American S. S. Union.

† This disposition to retire from the world, and live in solitude, is not to be justified. We were created to live in society, and God designs that we should help one another. Yet, as it was generally considered right by the church at that time, those who gave themselves up to this kind of life, might

this?" said he to Alypius. "Illiterate men rise and seize heaven, while we, with all our learning, are rolling in the filth of sin." In great distress of mind, he went out into the garden. Alypius followed, and they sat down together, at a distance from the house. With indignation he rebuked his sinful heart, because it would not give itself up to God. The world and its pleasures seemed to whisper him, "Shall we part?" On the other hand, it came into his mind, "Do what these have done, in the strength of the Lord. Throw thyself on him; fear not, he will not suffer thee to fall." He rose up hastily and retired, to give vent to a flood of tears. He fell prostrate under a fig-tree, and cried out, "How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? Remember not my old iniquities. How long shall I say, to-morrow? Why should not this hour put an end to my slavery?" While offering up this prayer he wept bitterly. He returned, and took up the Bible. When he

have done it with pious motives. Superstitions prevailed extensively, among the best men of that age, and greatly clouded the pure light of the gospel.

had read, all his doubts vanished. He closed the book, and with a peaceful countenance, gave it to Alypius. They then went both together to Augustine's mother. Her mourning was now turned into joy, for the Lord had answered her prayers.

Augustine was now filled with holy joy. His mind was set free from the bondage of sin. He communed in sweet delight with the Lord, whom he calls, "My light, my riches, my Saviour, and my God." When the time of vacation in his school arrived, he told his scholars they must provide themselves with another teacher. He then wrote to Ambrose, informing him of the change in his feelings. Some time after, he was baptized, and joined the church.

After Augustine joined the church, he returned into Africa, with some friends, and lived three years upon his father's estate. While on their way his mother died.

Patricius, Augustine's father, was a very passionate man. He was also intemperate and vicious. His wife patiently endured his ill treatment, and tried to win him over to the service of the Lord by her amiable manners.

When he was angry, she would bear with him in silence and composure. When he got over his passion, she would reprove him mildly and tenderly. Many women would complain to her of the blows and harsh treatment they received from their husbands, whose tempers were milder than that of Patricius. They wondered why it had never been heard that Patricius, a man of such a violent temper, had beaten his wife. She would tell them how she managed, and advise them to do the same. Some of them followed her advice, and were successful in subduing the tempers of their husbands. Others neglected it, and experienced continual vexation. She was also careful never to repeat any thing she heard said against others. At length she gained her husband to the Lord, and he died in the faith of Jesus. Thus was this excellent woman made the instrument, in the hand of the Lord, of bringing both her husband and son to embrace the Saviour.

While on their way to Africa, Augustine and his mother were standing alone at a window, in a house near the mouth of the Tiber. There they talked about the joys of heaven

and the glories of the eternal world. This world appeared to them of no value. She said to him, "Son, I have now no delight in life. What I should do here, or why I am here, I know not; for the hope of this life is quite spent. One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in larger measure. What do I here?" Five days after this she was taken sick with a fever, and died in nine days after.

Augustine goes on to confess his sins, in a manner which shows that he was intimately acquainted with the deep depravity of the human heart. He then expresses his confidence in Christ, as the Mediator between God and man. In the conclusion of his confession, he breaks out in the following strain:—"How hast thou loved us, Father, in giving thy Son for us, sinners? He was our priest and sacrifice. Though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet, for our sakes he was made subject to death. Well may my hope be strong, through such an intercessor; else I should despair. Many and great are my diseases; thy medicine is larger still. Were

he not made flesh for us, we could not dream of having any union with him. Lo, I cast all my care on thee, Lord, that I may live. Thou knowest my weakness and ignorance, teach and heal me. He hath redeemed me with his blood, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

A person of quality in Hippo requested the instructions of Augustine, and he removed to that city. Valerius, the bishop of Hippo, was a man of great piety; but not very capable of discharging the duties of the office. Through the strong and urgent desires of the people, Augustine was ordained presbyter in his church. He wept under a sense of the importance of the ministerial office. His preaching was very useful. He was the means of reviving Christian doctrine and practice in the church, and of defeating many heresies.

Valerius rejoiced, and gave thanks to God, that he had given him such a help in his pastoral labours. He had him ordained bishop, in connexion with himself. After Valerius died, Augustine continued bishop of Hippo. He established a monastery, or seminary, in which men were educated for the ministry.

Ten bishops, settled in various parts of Africa, were raised up in this school. They established other institutions like it, and from them, other churches were supplied with faithful and pious pastors. By these means, and by the writings of Augustine, accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, purity of doctrine and practice was in a great measure restored to the churches in Africa and Europe. I am sorry that I cannot give my young readers a more particular account of this revival. But very few particulars have been preserved respecting it. Yet, from the accounts we have, it is evident the Holy Spirit was poured out, and vital piety greatly revived, in the western church.

QUESTIONS.—How did Augustine behave, in his childhood? In what light does he look upon his disobedience to his teachers and parents, and his deceitfulness among his playfellows? Is it right for children to take things from their parents, without leave? What did Augustine do, while at home, during vacation? What commandments do children break, when they go into people's gardens and orchards, and take fruit? What was the character of Augustine,

when he went to Carthage? What change took place in his mind, while there? What error did he embrace at this time? What was his mother doing all this time? What circumstance happened while Augustine was teaching rhetoric in his native town? What effect had this upon his mind? Where did he go then? What happened, after Augustine arrived at Rome? What was his mother doing then? Where did he go from Rome? What effect had the preaching of Ambrose upon him? What remarkable circumstance is related of Alypius, while at Rome? Whose instructions did Augustine seek? What happened while Politian was visiting Augustine and Alypius? How did Augustine feel after this? Where did he go, after he joined the church? What conversation passed between her and Augustine, just before her death? For what purpose did Augustine go to Hippo? To what offices was he appointed there? What effects followed his preaching? What did he establish in Hippo? What good was done by this seminary?

CHAPTER III.

The Controversy about Pelagianism.

PELAGIUS was born in Britain. He was a monk, and travelled from one monastery to another, throughout the Roman empire. His morals were strict, and in the early part of his life, he was considered a man of real piety. He had a companion named Cœlestius, who was an Irishman. When Pelagius was growing old, he began to teach false doctrines.

After Pelagius had visited the monasteries of Egypt, he settled at Rome. There he undertook, by degrees, to undermine the whole doctrine of grace. In the year 410, Rome was taken by the Goths. Pelagius and Cœlestius, with many others, fled into Africa. Pelagius left Africa, and went to Palestine. There he was opposed by Jerom, a monk, who wrote against his opinions. In Africa,

Cœlestius discovered his sentiments openly. He was called before a council held in Carthage, and condemned as a heretic. By this means, he was disappointed in his ambitious hopes of rising to office in the church.

At the same time, Pelagius was writing against the doctrines of the gospel. Augustine answered his writings. After Cœlestius was driven from Africa, he went to Sicily. Augustine wrote against the opinions which he was spreading there, and preached against them in Africa.

In the year 415, Pelagius brought over two well disposed young men to his self-righteous sentiments. Augustine convinced them of their error, and brought them to a knowledge of the truth. They afterwards showed him a book written by Pelagius, in which he denied that men are ever assisted by the grace of God, and maintained that the natural powers of the mind are sufficient to lead us to perfection. This book, also, Augustine answered. Pelagius complained of this, and pretended that he did not write the book. Augustine sent it, with his reply, to Innocent, bishop of

Rome. He requested him to mark the sentiments of each ; and told him if Pelagius would deny the sentiments contained in the book, and openly acknowledge the doctrines of grace, he would be satisfied. Innocent condemned Pelagius' book, as containing abominable opinions, never before known in the world.

In the same year, Pelagius was called before a synod of fourteen bishops, at Lydda, in Palestine. His accusers were absent, on account of sickness. The bishops of the council had but a poor knowledge of the Latin language, in which the books of Pelagius were written. He explained away the points which were objected to in his writings, and the council cleared him.

The next year a council was held at Carthage, to regulate some affairs of the church. Here, the opinions of Pelagius were examined and condemned. They also wrote to Innocent, bishop of Rome, that Pelagius and his followers ought to be turned out of the church. This letter was signed by sixty-eight bishops. A council of Numidian bishops also met at Milevum, and wrote in the same manner to

the bishop of Rome. Augustine and his friend Alypius, now bishop of Tagasta, with Aurelius, of Carthage, and two other bishops wrote in their own names to Innocent. They explained the subject particularly, and showed that the council at Lydda, which had cleared Pelagius, had been imposed upon. Innocent, in his answer, agreed with them, and condemned the author of the heresy.

The emperor made a law, the same year, banishing the Pelagians from Rome. This was an unjustifiable exercise of power, on the part of the emperor. But it was then thought to be the duty of the civil authority to regulate the affairs of the church. It does not, however, appear that the Pelagians were treated with cruelty.

After this, Cœlestius went to Constantinople, and tried to spread his doctrines there, but he was disappointed in his object. Eighteen of the party then wrote to the bishop of Thessalonica, asking leave to defend the doctrines of the church against the heresy of the Manichees. Under this pretence, they spread abroad, in their writings, their ideas of the

powers of human nature. Augustine answered their arguments. Atticus wrote against them to Rome, and the sect underwent a general condemnation. Pelagius was still in Palestine, where he again imposed upon the church. In consequence of this, Augustine wrote a book on original sin and the grace of Christ, in which he laid open the artifices of Pelagius.

In consequence of what was said about Pelagianism, and the doctrines of grace, some ignorant persons went to the contrary extreme. They denied the free agency of man, and taught that it was wrong to tell sinners to repent, and that Christians should only pray for them. In answer to them, Augustine wrote a book called "*Rebuke and Grace.*" In this book, he explained the consistency between divine grace and human duty.

Pelagius and Cœlestius were entirely defeated in their efforts to corrupt the doctrines of the church. Nothing farther is known of them; but it is probable that Pelagius retired into his own country; for Britain was afterwards troubled with his doctrines.

Infidels make use of the disputes among professors of religion, about the doctrines of

the gospel, as an argument against Christianity. It is to be lamented that there has been so much contention about matters not essential to the salvation of the soul. These disputes have generally been maintained by worldly-minded men, little acquainted with the spirit of the gospel. But controversies about the essential doctrines of the gospel, have always proved favourable to the purity of the church. True Christians never knowingly embrace any opinions contrary to these doctrines. If deceived, they will soon see their errors, and lay hold of the truth. But hypocrites are often left to embrace the worst of errors. The Lord suffers heresies to disturb the church, "that they who are approved may be made manifest." By this means, the real characters of false professors are made known. By the attention which is drawn to the subject in dispute, true Christians become better acquainted with the truth, and more firmly established. Such was the effect of the Pelagian controversy. The doctrines of grace had been very much darkened by the writings of Origen, and by the study of heathen philosophy. This dispute led to a full examination of the subject.

Augustine wrote and preached against Pelagianism for twenty years. The uncommon measure of the spirit poured upon him, at his conversion, prepared him for this work. The Holy Spirit attended his labours; and this error was one principal means of introducing clearer views of the influences of the spirit of God, than had prevailed for a long time; and of reviving Christian truth, humility, and piety. The effects of this revival were solid and lasting, though not so remarkable as that which commenced on the day of Pentecost. The writings of Augustine were preserved and read by true Christians for many centuries; and were the means of producing much real piety in individuals, even to the time of the reformation.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Pelagius born? Who was his companion? What did Pelagius do when he began to grow old? How did Pelagius begin to spread his errors? After visiting the monasteries, what did he do at Rome? Where did Pelagius and Celestius go, when the Goths took Rome? What did Celestius do in Africa? What was done by the council of Carthage? What was done at

the council of Lydda? What did Pelagius and his followers do to the monasteries under the care of Jerom? What was done at the councils of Carthage and Milevum? What did Celestius do at Constantinople? Who opposed him there? What did Pelagius do at this time in Palestine? What did Augustine do, in consequence of this? What was the effect of the Pelagian controversy upon the church?

CHAPTER IV.

The Donatists—Farther particulars of the Life of Augustine—His death.

THE Donatists, in the fifth century, were divided into a great many parties. Some of them were mild and peaceable people. But there was a set among them called Circumcelliones, who were a band of savage robbers.

They delighted in bloodshed. They cared very little for their own lives or the lives of others, and many of them killed themselves. They hated the ministers of the general church. They waylaid them, attacked them with an armed force, and sometimes killed them. Augustine was several times waylaid in this manner. On one occasion he was led, by a mistake of his guide, into a wrong road. By this particular providence his life was saved; for a party of the Circumcelliones were watching for him on the road which he had intended to travel. The peaceable Donatists abhorred the conduct of the Circumcelliones; yet they could not be justified in separating from the general church. The reader will find an account of the origin of this sect, and the causes of their separation, in the "Stories of the Church in the Fourth Century."

Augustine wrote to the emperor, requesting him to put a stop to the lawless and savage conduct of the Circumcelliones. At the same time he desired him to make use of no other arms against the peaceable Donatists, than preaching and arguments. But the Circumcelliones had treated a bishop in a very bar-

barous manner, and it was supposed that his life was lost. Under the excitement produced by this, several African bishops wrote to the emperor, and requested him to put down the whole sect of the Donatists. The emperor and his court ordered the Donatists to be fined, and their bishops banished. The barbarous conduct of the Circumcelliones deserved severe punishment; but by this law the innocent were condemned with the guilty.

After this, many of the Circumcelliones confessed their error with deep humility, and returned into the bosom of the church. A great many others had continued their connexion with the Donatists from custom, and the fear of being disturbed by the Circumcelliones. When they saw themselves exposed to punishment by this law, they began to examine the ground of their separation. They saw their error, repented of it, and returned to the church. When Augustine saw this effect, he changed his mind, and wrote in favour of the course pursued by the government. This is the only act of Augustine's life which appears like persecution. The principle cannot be justified; yet it is easy to see how this

godly man might have been deceived by the law.

Augustine had suffered, in his younger days, from the errors of the Manichees. He, therefore, exerted himself against them; and God blessed his labours, in recovering souls which they had deceived. On one occasion, as he was preaching, he wandered from his subject, without explaining what he had promised in the beginning, and finished his sermon with an argument against the Manichees. After going home, he asked his friends if they did not take notice of the singular manner in which he lost his subject. They replied that they recollected it, and that they were at the time astonished. He then told them, he believed the Lord intended that some Manichee in the congregation should be benefited through his mistake and forgetfulness. In a day or two afterwards, a merchant came to Augustine, and threw himself at his feet, entreating his prayers. He had lived a Manichee many years, and vainly spent much money in support of that sect. He confessed that this sermon had been the means of convincing him of his error. He

gave up his business, and devoting himself to God, became a useful minister of the gospel.

One of the Manichees, named Felix, came to Hippo. Augustine held a public dispute with him in the church. The third time they met, Felix was convinced of his error, and embraced the truth. He was the means, in the hand of God, of rooting out, almost entirely, the heresies of the Manichees and Pelagians. He lived to see the fruit of his labours, in the revival of a pure religion in his own church, and in other parts of Africa. He also held a public dispute with Maximus, bishop of the Arians. In these matters he did not manifest the harsh and bitter spirit too often indulged in religious controversies. His object was to do good, not to gain the victory over his opposers; he treated them with meekness, and mourned over their errors.

A great portion of Augustine's time during the week, was employed in settling matters of difference among the people; for the Christians of Hippo brought their difficulties to him, instead of going to law with one another.

Augustine had some lines written upon his table, which declared that, if any person should attack the character of one that was absent, he should leave the table. On one occasion, some bishops, who were his intimate friends, broke this rule in their conversation. He told them that these lines must be rubbed out from the table, or he would leave them, and go to his chamber. He was very attentive to the wants of the poor. He lived in the same house with his clergy, and they all ate at one table. He spent as little time as possible in worldly affairs. He was always content with old buildings, and old furniture, for he was afraid of being entangled with the world.

Genseric, king of the Vandals, made war against Africa. The Vandals were a barbarous people, and they made dreadful desolation. They bore the Christian name, but were Arians. This made them far more savage towards Christians, than if they had been heathen. The city of Hippo was besieged fourteen months. Augustine prayed that God would either free them from the siege, or give Christians patience to endure their sufferings, or else take him out of the world. In the

third month of the siege he died of a fever. In his last sickness he had the fifty-first Psalm written on the wall of his room. He read it frequently, and wept much. Ten days before his death, he desired to be left alone as much as possible, for he wished to spend all his time in prayer. He left no will, for he had nothing to give away. He had provided for his own relations before; and what was left after this, he had already spent in doing good.

QUESTIONS.—Who were the Circumcelliones? Did the rest of the Donatists justify the conduct of these robbers? How did Augustine once escape their violence? What advice did Augustine give the emperor about the Donatists? What advice did some other African bishops give? What did the emperor do? Was his conduct just? What effect had this law upon the Donatists? What singular providence led to the conversion of the Manichee merchant? What led to the conversion of Felix? How did Augustine treat those who opposed him in argument? What did Augustine do to prevent evil speaking?

CHAPTER V.

*Short Account of Jerom, and some other
Christian writers of the Fifth Century.*

JEROM was one of the most learned men of the age in which he lived. . He was taught the doctrines of the gospel from his infancy ; yet his religious experience does not appear to have been so deep as that of Augustine. After gaining what knowledge he could from travelling, he determined to live the life of a monk. He spent four years in the deserts of Syria, where he studied with great industry.

After this, he returned to Rome, where he became acquainted with several rich ladies. Among these were Paula, who was descended from a very honourable family, and Marcella. Jerom was very much attached to the monastic life, and he persuaded these ladies to devote themselves to it. They went, in company with Jerom, to Bethlehem, where Christ was born. There Paula built four monasteries, one for men, and three for women. She

presided over the nuns, and Jerom over the monks. He lived there the rest of his life. He had been appointed a presbyter in the church, but would never accept the office of bishop. He wrote a great many books. Though humble and pious, yet he was of very little service to mankind. He was very superstitious, and had not learned that it was his duty to make his life useful to his fellow-creatures.

Paulinus, bishop of Nola, was one of the most humble and pious writers of his time. He belonged to a noble family, and held offices of great honour in the empire. He married Therasia, a rich lady. She was very pious, and persuaded her husband to forsake the honours of this world, and lead a private life. He gradually parted with his property, and lived in retirement, at Barcelona, in Spain. The people of that city had such an esteem for him, that they obliged him to become a minister. He did not dislike the office; but he felt himself so unworthy, that he was not willing to accept of it. In writing to a friend, he says, "I can scarce comprehend the weight of that dignity. I tremble, when I consider its importance; for I know my own weak-

ness. But he that gives wisdom to the simple, and perfects praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, is able, by his grace, to make me worthy, whom he called when unworthy.

After this, he lived at Nola sixteen years, in private life. In the year 409 he was ordained bishop. He was acquainted with Sulpicius Severus, the Roman historian. Severus had broken off from his sins in the flower of his age. When he was renowned as a great lawyer, he forsook all his worldly honour, and despised human greatness, that he might follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He asked Paulinus to give him his picture. The bishop called his request a piece of folly, and only gave him a picture of his heart. This I will show the young reader. He says, "I am ashamed to have my picture drawn as I am, and I dare not consent to have it made otherwise. I hate what I am, and am not what I wish to be. I find myself at war with myself, and am torn with an inward conflict. The flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The law of the body opposes the law of the spirit. Wo is me, because I have not taken away the

taste of the poisoned tree by that of the saving crop. The poison communicated to all men from our first parent by his sin, yet abideth in me." Perhaps the reader, who has never experienced this sense of in-dwelling sin, may ask, "How can a man so wretched find any comfort?" The bishop answers this question, in a letter to another person. "Jesus Christ," says he, "is the rock containing the spring of living water. This spring we find not far from us, when we are very thirsty in this world. This is what refreshes us, and prevents us from being consumed by the heat of in-dwelling sin. This is the rock on which the house is founded that shall never fall. It was opened at the side, and cast out water and blood. Here we taste two wholesome fountains, the water of grace, and the blood to answer for our sins; which proves at once where our salvation comes from, and what it cost." This bishop led a retired and temperate life. He possessed a remarkable tenderness of conscience, and meekness of spirit; he maintained a constant sense of his own weakness, and his need of divine grace. He died in the year 431.

Theodoret was one of the best and most learned men in the eastern church; though he was very superstitious. There was much contention among worldly ministers in the eastern church, about trifles. He tried to preserve peace. This displeased those who loved disputing better than the practice of godliness; and he was condemned by one of their councils. He had been a bishop twenty-six years, and nothing had been found against his character. He had brought over to the church more than a thousand Marcionites,* and many Arians.† At that time there was not a heretic in all the eight hundred churches under his care. He had been often stoned, and attacked both by Jews and Pagans. While many bishops got rich in a few years, he had neither house, nor land, nor money; for he chose to be poor. Thus we see, cold-hearted and worldly professors, whether ministers or people, will persecute devoted and faithful Christians. He was ordained bishop of Cyrus, a city of Syria,

* For an account of the Marcionites, see Stories of the Second and Third Centuries.

† For a knowledge of Arianism, see Stories of the Church in the Fourth Century.

about the year 420. He gained the affections of his people, and they loved him till his death. His spirit was humble, heavenly, and charitable. He walked in the faith, hope, and love of the gospel, a shining ornament to a dark age and country. Through the influence of Leo, bishop of Rome, he was restored to his office, after the persecution already mentioned; and he died in peace.

Leo, of Rome, was one of the greatest men of his age. In the affairs of civil government, he was well skilled. He supported the truth in the church, and took much pains about discipline. But in him appears an ambitious disposition to increase the power of the Roman bishop. The bishops of Rome had acquired a very great influence, by being situated at the capitol of the empire. A disposition now began to manifest itself, with these bishops, to assume an authority over the whole church. This spirit continued to increase, till at last, the bishop of Rome was declared universal bishop or pope. The Christian character of Leo is doubtful.

A great many other Christian writers lived in this century, some of whom were pious,

godly men; but I can relate nothing of them which I think would be interesting to the young reader.

QUESTIONS.—What was the character of Jerom? What kind of life did he live? Who went with him to Bethlehem? What did they do there? Can you relate any thing interesting of Paulinus, of Nola? What was the character of Theodoret? Can you relate any thing interesting respecting him? What was the character of Leo, bishop of Rome?

CHAPTER VI.

History of the Western Church till the close of the Fifth Century.

AFTER the death of Theodosius the Great, the empire was divided between his two sons, Honorius and Arcadius. Honorius reigned in the west and Arcadius in the east. They were both weak men, and the empire was torn with commotions, which threatened its destruction. Honorius supported the church and opposed

idolatry and heresy, as Theodosius had done.* One law made during this emperor's reign, deserves to be noticed. It shows the mild influence of Christianity. By this law the judges were directed to take all the prisoners out of the prisons, once every week, and inquire whether they were properly treated. During the reign of Honorius, Rome was taken by the Goths, and the inhabitants suffered great afflictions. A great many of the people went into a very large church, in the city and the barbarians did not disturb them. Others were carried away captive; and many opportunities were offered for exercising Christian virtues.

Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, was one of the greatest ornaments of Gaul in this century. He was a man of quality, and in the early part of his life, a lawyer. Amator, who was bishop before him, ordained him deacon. A month after his death, Germanus was chosen bishop by the clergy, nobility, and common people. He was very unwilling to accept the office, but they forced it upon him. About the time

* See Stories of the Church in the Fourth Century.

of Augustine's death, he visited Britain for the purpose of opposing Pelagianism. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, went with Germanus. He was a man of great piety, and was bishop fifty-two years. When they arrived in Britain, they preached in the churches, in the highways, and in the fields. Great crowds flocked together to hear them. They held a public dispute with the Pelagians. The people decided in their favour, and the errorists were put to silence. The Picts, a barbarous people of the north, made war against the Britons. They had called in the Saxons, a savage people who lived in Germany, to help them against the Picts. But instead of helping the Britons, the Saxons joined the Picts against them. The Britons were much frightened, and asked Germanus and Lupus to help them. Germanus put himself at the head of the army. Most of the soldiers were baptized before they began to march. The enemy had to pass through a valley. Here Germanus posted his men, surprised the enemy, and defeated them. After this, they returned to their own churches in Gaul.

At this time Scotland was in a state of com-

plete barbarism. Palladius was their first bishop. He was ordained in the year 431. The same year died Paulinus, of Nola, of whom some account was given in the last chapter. After Palladius died, Cœlestius, bishop of Rome, ordained Patrick, commonly called St. Patrick, in his place. He was born at Dunbarton in Scotland. He was carried captive into Ireland, where he learned the language of that country. When he had been there a few years, he was taken by some pirates, and carried into Gaul. He afterwards returned to Ireland as a missionary. The barbarous Irish would not hear him, and he went back to Gaul, and spent some time with Germanus, of Auxerre. He then went to Rome, and Cœlestius gave him support and assistance. He now returned to Ireland the second time. He taught the Irish people to read, and preached the gospel to them. The Holy Spirit attended his labours; and his success was so great that he has since been called the apostle of Ireland. He died in the year 460, at a great age.

It was mentioned in the last chapter that Genseric, king of the Vandals, had taken

Carthage. He showed no mercy towards the ministers of the general church. He killed many of them, and drove others from the churches. Although many were revived and purified, yet the church was very corrupt, and needed these afflictions. A great part of those who professed to be Christians, were sunk in all manner of wickedness; and the Lord sent these miseries upon them for their correction.

A very affecting scene took place at a council held at Braga in Lusitania, now Portugal, while the barbarous nations were overrunning the Roman empire. The president, whose name was Pancratian, addressed the council as follows: "Brethren, let our care be for the salvation of souls. I am afraid the miseries of the times will lead our people into the way of sinners. Let us give them an example of suffering for Jesus Christ, who suffered for us. As some of the barbarians are Arians, and others idolaters, let us confess our faith." He then stated in a few words the doctrines of the gospel, and they all agreed to them. Elipand, bishop of Conimbra said: "The barbarians are near us. They are now at Lisbon, and

they will soon be upon us. Let us all go home, and comfort and strengthen our people, in this trying time, and relieve their wants." All the bishops agreed to this. 'The president then told Potamius, bishop of Æminium, that he need not go home, because his church was destroyed, and the country laid waste. Potamius replied, "I did not receive the office of bishop to sit at my ease, but to labour. Let me comfort my flock, and suffer with them for Jesus Christ." "You have well spoken," replied the president, "God be with you." "God maintain you in your resolution," said all the bishops. "Let us depart with the peace of Jesus Christ."

A little while after, Arisbert, bishop of Oporto, wrote to a friend in the following touching strain: "I pity you, brother. May God look on our misery with an eye of mercy. Conimbra is taken; the servants of God are fallen with the edge of the sword; and Elipena the bishop, is carried away captive. Other cities are besieged, and there is nothing to be seen but misery, groaning, and anguish. I send you the decrees of the faith you ask for. I will send you all, if I can find out where

you are hid. I expect the same fate daily. 'The Lord have mercy on us.'" Sabbath scholars should learn from this, how to value their privileges.

Attila, the Hun, now made dreadful havoc in different parts of the empire. In the year 452, the emperor Honorius sent Leo, bishop of Rome, to him, who persuaded the barbarian not to make war upon Italy. Two years after this, Genseric, king of the Vandals, went to Rome. Leo went out to meet him and persuaded him to be content with taking the riches of the city, without burning the houses, or murdering the inhabitants. He returned again into Africa, and took with him many thousands of the people of Rome and Italy. These people were divided among his army. Husbands were separated from wives, and children from parents. When Deogratias, the bishop of Carthage saw this, his heart was moved with compassion. He sold all the vessels of gold and silver belonging to the churches under his care, and redeemed the captives. There were no houses large enough to contain so great a multitude, and he placed them all in two great churches. There he

supplied them with beds, and all things necessary for their health and comfort. Although he was an old man and very infirm, yet he visited all the beds, in the night. He lived only three years, after he was appointed bishop. He was beloved by all true Christians; for he honoured the doctrines of Christ by acts of meekness and charity.

Several Christians, who had endured many hardships under Genseric, were carried off into the desert by Caspur, king of the Moors. The people there lived in idolatry, and these pious persons told them about Jesus. A great multitude gave up their idolatry, and became Christians. They then sent across the desert to a Roman city, and informed the bishop of what they had done. The bishop sent ministers, who built a church, and baptized many of the barbarous people. Caspur was a Pagan, and a relation of Genseric. He informed the Arian king of what these Christians had done. Although he professed to be a Christian, yet he was very angry and condemned them to death. The converted Moors lamented greatly when deprived of their Christian friends and pastors. As the martyrs passed by, they said

to each of them, "Brother, pray for me. God has given me my desire. This is the way to the heavenly kingdom."

Genseric ordered the bishops to give up the vessels of the church, and the Holy Scriptures. They refused, and the Vandals took them by force, and plundered every thing.

While Christians were assembled for public worship at Regia, the Arians attacked the church, and killed them all. Genseric would not have any servants but Arians, either in his own house, or the houses of his children. A Christian in the service of his son, Theodoric, was treated with great cruelty, and finally put to death. Another, named Archinimus, was promised great wealth if he would embrace Arianism. But he could not be persuaded nor hired to dishonour Christ. He was condemned to death; but Genseric gave orders to the executioners that, if he maintained his courage at the moment fixed for his death, his life should be spared. Thus, Christian constancy was the means of saving his life.

Satur, son of Huneric, Genseric's eldest son, was steward of Huneric's house. He spoke with great freedom against Arianism.

He was accused, and threatened with the loss of all his property ; he was also told that, unless he embraced Arianism, his wife should be married to a keeper of camels. She had several children, one of which was an infant at the breast. She entreated him to give up his religion. He answered her, in the words of Job, “ ‘Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.’ Let them do what they will. I must remember the words of the Lord ; whoever doth not leave wife, or children, or lands, or houses, cannot be my disciple.” The Arians, his own near relations, stripped him of all he had, and reduced him to poverty.

Afterwards, Genseric ordered the church of Carthage to be shut up. He also banished the ministers. Wherever his arms prevailed, he made the people of God feel his fury. The whole western empire was now falling into ruins. In the year 476 Rome was taken by Odoacer, king of the Heruli. Africa was already under the dominion of the Vandals. Spain, and a great part of Gaul were held by the Goths. The other part of Gaul was taken by the Franks. They afterwards became

masters of the whole country ; which has since been called France, after their name. The southern part of Great Britain was taken by the Saxons. They were idolaters ; and the Britons, who were Christians, went into the mountains of Wales. The northern part of the island was so poor, that their enemies did not disturb them. The Franks were idolaters, and the barbarians, who ruled in other parts, were Arians. Evaric, king of the Goths in Spain, would not allow any Christian bishops to be ordained, in the place of those who were dead, and he sent others into banishment. The churches fell into decay, and the people seldom met for public worship. The state of the western church now appeared very gloomy. The wrath of God was poured out upon the churches, for mercies long abused. But there were a great many real Christians, who mourned over the wickedness of the times, and endured their afflictions with patience. These had been prepared for this dreadful season, by the revival of Christian doctrine, which took place in the time of Augustine.

Sidonius, of Lyons, belonged to one of the

noblest families in Gaul. He was a celebrated orator and poet. About the year 472 he was, contrary to his wishes, appointed bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne. Before he was chosen bishop, he would frequently sell his silver plate, without the knowledge of his wife, to get money to give to the poor. The Goths laid waste the country, during a great famine. Ecdicius, the brother of Sidonius, collected four thousand poor people of both sexes, lodged them in his houses, and gave them food till the famine was over. Patiens, bishop of Lyons, also sent relief to the poor in all parts of Gaul. He was a faithful minister, and brought back many of the Arians to the church. In these instances we see the fruit of Christian principle; it teaches people that riches are of no value, except as the means of doing good; it teaches us to love others as we love ourselves. If we do this, we shall feel the distresses of others as our own, and relieve them if in our power.

In the year 477 Genseric died, and Huneric, his son, was made king of the Vandals. At first he treated the Christians with mildness. I shall hereafter distinguish the members of

the general church, from the Arians, by the name of *Christians*; for I do not see in any of the Arians of this period one trait of character which deserves that name. The Christians of Carthage had been without a bishop twenty-four years. He told them that they might ordain a bishop, if they would consent that the Arians should have a bishop at Constantinople. They told him they would not accept a bishop on such terms. "Jesus Christ," said they, "will govern the church, as he has done hitherto."

But Huneric did not mind this, and Eugenius was chosen bishop. All mankind soon bore witness to his virtues. The Arians had all the property of the church. But Christians brought large sums of money to the bishop every day. He used no more of this for himself than what was necessary for his daily bread; the rest he gave to the poor. The Arian bishops soon complained, and called him a dangerous preacher. They told him that he ought not to suffer the Vandals, who were Arians, to hear him preach. But Eugenius told them that God's house was equally open to all.

Huneric had given the Christians this indulgence, to oblige the emperor of the east, at Constantinople. But he began gradually to show the ferocity of his disposition. He was afraid he should lose his Vandals, if they attended the preaching of Eugenius. He, therefore, set guards to attend the door of the church. When they saw men or women in the Vandal dress, they would strike them on the head with staves, jagged on the end; when they had twisted this into the hair, they would draw it back violently, tearing off the hair and skin. Many suffered very much by this means. Women, who had been treated in this manner, were led through the streets, and a crier went before them, to show them to the people. But Christians remained firm; and those who belonged to Huneric's court, could not be persuaded to embrace Arianism. He took away their pensions, and sent them to reap grain in the country. These persons had been brought up as gentlemen, and this punishment was very severe. But they bore their sufferings with patience, for the sake of Christ.

Huneric grew more and more cruel; he

treated the women in the monasteries with great barbarity, to make them accuse the bishops of crimes. But though many died under his tortures, he could get nothing from them against the bishops. He afterwards banished four thousand nine hundred and seventy-six Christians, ministers and people, into the desert.

Felix, of Abbirita, had been bishop forty-four years. By the palsy he had lost his speech and understanding. The Christians entreated the king, that the old man might be allowed to end his days quietly at Carthage. But the Arian king seemed to be ambitious to out-do the Pagans in cruelty. He replied, "Let him be tied to wild oxen, and carried where I have ordered." They tied him across a mule, and carried him like a piece of timber. The Christians were first sent to the cities of Sicca and Lares. The Moors were directed to receive them there, and carry them into the desert. They were first confined in prison: There their brethren were allowed to visit them and to preach. They also partook of the Lord's Supper.

But the guards were severely punished for giving the Christians these privileges. After this, none were allowed to visit the prisoners. They were thrown together, and crowded so closely in the prison, that they had no room to move. The effect of this was horrible beyond description. Yet none of them consented to become Arians, to free themselves from these sufferings. They loved the Lord Jesus Christ, in his true character; and they could not consent to dishonour him by denying his divine nature.

At length the Moors were ordered to march. The Christians went out of prison on the Lord's day. Their clothes, their heads, and their faces, were covered all over with filth. As they went along, they sung, "such honour have all his saints." Cyprian, bishop of Uniziba, comforted them, and gave them all he had. He also desired the honour of being carried with them: but this was not granted him at that time. He was put in prison, and after much suffering, sent into banishment. As they passed along, the whole country was full of lamentation. The people flocked around

them, and threw their children at their feet. "Alas," said they, "to whom do you leave us? Who shall administer the Lord's supper to us? Why are we not allowed to go with you?" One woman came leading a child by the hand. "Run, my boy," said she, "see what haste these holy men make to receive the crown." She was reproved for wishing to go along with them. She replied, "I am the daughter of the late bishop of Zurita; and I am carrying this child, who is my grandson, lest he be left alone, and the enemy draw him into the snares of death." The bishops, with tears in their eyes, could only say, "God's will be done."

When the aged or the young, who were feeble, were not able to go as fast as the rest, the Moors struck them with their weapons, or threw stones at them. Such as were not able to walk, were tied by the feet, and dragged along. Many died on the way. The rest arrived at the desert, and were fed for a while with barley. Afterwards, they were left to starve.

In the year 483, Huneric sent a law to Eu-

genius, with orders to have it read in the church. It was also sent to all the churches in Africa. By this law, all the bishops were commanded to go to Carthage, and there dispute with the Arians, to prove their faith, if they could, by Scripture. The bishops complained of this law; but the king would not listen to them. He persecuted the most learned bishops. He banished Donatian, after having given him one hundred and fifty blows on the feet. He treated others with great cruelty, and would not allow any of the Arians to eat with Christians.

On the first of February, which was the day appointed for the dispute, the bishops from all parts of the country went to Carthage. For many days, Huneric said nothing about the proposed conference. He separated the bishops of the greatest abilities from the rest, intending to put them to death upon false pretences. Lætus, one of the most learned among them, he burned alive, to intimidate the rest. When the conference was opened, the Christians chose ten of their bishops to answer for the whole. Cirila, the chief of the Arian

bishops, was seated on a great throne, with the rest of his party near. The Christian bishops were standing below them. They saw what a mock dispute it was going to be, and complained. Cirila ordered each of them to be beaten one hundred blows on the feet. Eugenius replied, "May God look down on the violence that is offered us." Cirila found the bishops better prepared to defend the doctrines of the Bible than he had expected, and undertook to avoid the conference. The Christian bishops expected this, and prepared a confession of faith, in which the doctrine of the Trinity was fully acknowledged. This they read, concluding in this manner: "This is our faith, supported by the authority of the evangelists and apostles, and received by all the true churches of Christ, throughout the world; in which, by the grace of God, we hope to persevere till death."

The Arians were enraged at this confession, and sent word to the king that the bishops had raised a clamour to avoid the conference. The tyrant immediately sent orders through the provinces, and all the churches were shut up,

and their property given to the Arians. He allowed Christians four months to consider whether they would turn Arians. He took away from the bishops their horses, and all their clothes, except what they had on; turned them out of the city; and threatened terrible punishments upon any one who should give them food or lodging. They remained outside of the walls of the city, exposed to the weather. Here they accidentally met with the king, and said to him, "Why are we treated thus?" He looked on them with fury, and ordered some horsemen to ride in among them, by which many of them were wounded. After this, he ordered them to go to a certain place, where they were shown a paper rolled up, and required to swear to what was written in it. "Are we like beasts," said they, "without understanding, that we should be required to swear at a venture, without knowing what is in the paper?" Of four hundred and forty-six bishops, who came to the conference, forty-eight died, three hundred and forty-eight were banished, and the rest made their escape.

Huneric seemed to have exercised even a worse spirit than the heathen emperors. He sent executioners among the people, who whipped, hanged, and burned Christians, without mercy. Eugenius had written a letter to his church, exhorting them to persevere in the faith of the gospel. When the trial came, many of them gave the noblest proofs of their sincerity. Donsysia, a lady, was whipped till the blood streamed from her body. She said to her persecutors, "Ministers of the devil, what you now do to confound me with shame, is my glory." She exhorted the rest to suffer martyrdom rather than to dishonour Christ. When she saw her son dreading the torture, she looked severely on him, and said, "Remember, son, that we have been baptized in the name of the Trinity. Let us not lose the garment of salvation, lest the master should say, Cast them into outer darkness." After hearing this, the young man suffered death with constancy. She embraced his body, and thanked God, with a loud voice. Many were strengthened by her exhortations, and suffered with her. The tortures of many of them

were dreadful, beyond description. A woman called Victoria bore the most cruel sufferings, with great patience and constancy. Her husband tried to persuade her to embrace Arianism, and save her life, for the sake of their children. But she loved the Lord Jesus better than husband and children; and she could not consent to dishonour him by calling him a mere creature.

At this time, Victorian was governor of Carthage, under the king. He was the richest man in Africa. The Arians were very anxious to gain him over to their cause. Huneric promised him his peculiar favour, if he would consent to be re-baptized, and renounce the doctrine of the Trinity. "Tell the king," said he, "If there were no other life but this, I could not, for a little temporal honour, be ungrateful to my God, who hath granted me grace to believe in him." The king was very angry at this, and had him tortured to death.

At Tambaia, two brothers were hung up a whole day, with large stones tied to their feet. One of them was at length overcome by the

torture, and desired to embrace Arianism, and be taken down. "No, no," said the other. "This, brother, is not what we swore to Jesus Christ. I will testify against you, when we come before his awful throne, that we swore by his body and blood, that we would suffer for his sake." The other was roused by this, and cried out, "Torment us as you please; I will follow my brother's example." The executioners were quite fatigued with torturing them with hot irons and hooks. At length, they dismissed them, saying that every one appeared ready to follow the example of the two brothers, and that none were brought over to Arianism.

At Typasa, the secretary of Cirila, was ordained bishop, by the Arians. When the people heard of this, they removed into Spain, which was beyond the dominions of Huneric, except a few, who could find no ships to go in. The new bishop tried to gain the favour of these. But they met in a private house for worship, and would not go to hear him. The bishop informed Huneric of this. He ordered their tongues to be torn out, and their right

hands to be cut off. He intended, by this, to prevent them from confessing the truth. But the Lord brought his counsel to nought. After the tongues of the Christians had been torn out by the roots, they were still able to speak so as to be understood.

The whole clergy of Carthage were starved almost to death, and then banished. Two Vandals, who loved the truth, with their mother, forsook their riches, and followed the clergy into exile. Some young children, who had excellent voices, and used to sing in the churches, had been banished with the multitude of Christians sent into the desert. Theucarius, who had taught them to sing, and who had now turned Arian, advised the governors to send for them. Twelve of them were sent for; but they cried, and, holding the banished clergy by the knees, refused to leave them. They were taken from them by force, and carried back to Carthage. But neither flatteries nor punishments could destroy their attachment to their ministers.

The Arian bishops and clergy went about, armed with swords. Eugenius, bishop of

Carthage, was given in charge to one of them named Anthony. He treated him with great cruelty. A bishop named Habet-Deum, was bound hand and foot. Anthony stopped his mouth, and poured water on his body. The Arians then said to him, "My brother, you are now a Christian, as well as we; what should hinder you, in future, from observing the will of the king?" The bishop answered, "While you were stopping my mouth, I made a solemn protest against your violence, which the angels have written down, and will present to God." Persons were stopped on the highways, and brought to the Arian bishops, who re-baptized them by force. None were suffered to go from place to place, but such as could show a certificate that they had been baptized by the Arians. They put the physician Liberatus and his wife into separate prisons. Some person informed her that her husband had obeyed the king, and become an Arian. "Let me see him," said she, "and I will do what is well pleasing to God." They took her out of the prison to her husband. She said to him, "Unhappy man, unworthy

of the grace of God, why will you perish eternally for a momentary glory? Will your gold and silver deliver you from hell-fire?" Her husband asked her what they had been telling her, and assured her that he should never renounce the faith. They probably told her this, to shake her resolution.

In the year 485, after a horrible reign of seven years, Huneric died, a monument of God's wrath. Like Herod,* Galerius, and Maximin, he was eaten by worms, and died a miserable death. Gontamond, his nephew, was made king after him. He put a stop to the persecution, and brought Eugenius back to Carthage.

In the year 493, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, conquered Odoacer, and became master of all Italy. He then made a law, forbidding those who had favoured Odoacer, to make wills or sell their lands. All Italy was alarmed; and Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, was employed to intercede with the king. Lawrence, bishop of Milan, joined with him, and they went to-

* Acts xii. 23.

gether to Theodoric. They obtained favour for all except a few leaders of the party of Odoacer. Theodoric had known Epiphanius before; and he respected him. He talked with him in private, and said to him, "You see the desolations of Italy. The Burgundians have carried away captive a number of the inhabitants. I wish to redeem them. None of the bishops is so proper to send upon this business as yourself. Undertake it, and I will give you what money is necessary." Epiphanius agreed to go, if the king would let Victor, bishop of Turin, go with him. In the year 494, Epiphanius went over the Alps. All the people came out to meet him, and brought presents, which he gave to the poor. When he came to Lyons, to Gondebaud, the king of the Burgundians, he advised him to let the captives go, without money. Gondebaud knew the character of Epiphanius, and restored to him all the prisoners, except those who were taken in arms. They were considered the property of those who took them. Six thousand were sent away without ransom. By Theodoric's money, with the liberality of a lady of quality, and of Avitus, bishop of

Vienne, the rest were redeemed. Epiphanius returned into Italy with a multitude of redeemed captives, and persuaded Theodoric to give them their lands again.

Epiphanius devoted himself to the Lord while very young. At the age of twenty-eight, he was chosen bishop. He gave himself up wholly to the service of God, and the good of mankind. He was often successfully employed in public affairs. In the year 474, he was sent by Nepos, emperor of the west, to make peace with Evaric, king of the Visigoths, which he did. In 476, Odoacer made himself master of Italy. Epiphanius, by his influence with him, obtained the freedom of a number of captives. He repaired the city of Pavia, which had been plundered, and re-built the churches, without any money, except what Providence sent him. During the contest between Theodoric, and Odoacer, he softened the horrors of civil war, by his benevolence. He did good to all, and even supported those who had pillaged his lands. He died in the year 496, being fifty-eight years old.

Gelasius, bishop of Rome, died the same

year. He was constantly employed, either in prayer, reading, writing, business, or in talking with people about heavenly things. He avoided both idleness and extravagance, and gave great sums to the poor.

The Franks or French were a German nation, that lived near the river Rhine. They passed over this river, into Gaul, about the year 420, under Pharamond, their first king. Clovis, the third king after him, overturned entirely the Roman power in Gaul, and founded the French monarchy. He married Clotilda, niece of Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians. She was a zealous Christian, though her uncle, and the whole of her nation, were Arians. Clovis, her husband, was a Pagan.

The queen sent Remi, bishop of Rheims, to teach the king. Clovis received his instructions, and his people embraced the Gospel with great readiness. The king and his sister, and three thousand of his army, were baptized at Rheims. We have no reason to believe that this change at all affected the heart of Clovis. Yet the Lord made use of it for the benefit of the church. He was the only prince in the world, at that time, who

professed the true faith of the Gospel. Anastasius, the eastern emperor, favoured heresy, and the rest of the European princes were Arians. Although Clovis was not a Christian, yet the Lord employed him as an instrument to defend the truth, and protect the church.

Gontamond, the Vandal, still increased his kindness to the church. In the year 494, he opened all the churches, after they had been shut ten years and a half, and recalled the bishops who had been banished.

This brings down the history of the church to the close of the fifth century. Superstition had been gradually growing both in this and the previous century. People who called themselves Christians, began to pray to the saints who had suffered martyrdom, and to trust in their superstitious ceremonies, instead of depending alone upon Christ. The way was fast preparing for the idolatrous practices afterwards introduced into the church. Had it not been for the revival of religion in the early part of this century, the church could not have endured the dreadful distresses that came upon it, by the persecutions of the bar-

barous heretics and Pagans. But true piety still lived in Africa, Italy, Spain, France, and Britain. The doctrine of true conversion, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit, had been greatly revived, in the days of Augustine; and its influence was still felt in the church. Eminent examples of piety were seen during the late persecutions. THE LORD JESUS STILL HAD MANY FAITHFUL WITNESSES ON EARTH.

QUESTIONS.—What was the state of the Roman empire, after the death of Theodosius the Great? What happened during the reign of Honorius? What can you relate of Germanus? Who was the first bishop of Scotland? What can you relate of St. Patrick? Can you relate any thing interesting of the council of Praga? What benevolent action can you relate of Deogratias, bishop of Carthage? What was done by some Christians who were taken by the Moors? How were they treated by Genseric? What did Genseric order the bishops to do? How was Valerian treated? What was done at Regia? What can you relate of Satur? What was done by Sidonius, Edicias, and Patiens?

What happened in the year 477? How did Huneric treat Christians at first? What sort of a man was Eugenius, bishop of Carthage? What measures were taken to prevent the Vandals from going to hear Eugenius? How many Christians did Huneric banish into the desert? How were they treated before they started, and on the way? How did the people feel when they saw them passing along? What law did Huneric make in the year 483? How were the Christian bishops treated, when they had assembled for the conference? What was done to Victorian? What was done to two brothers? What happened at Typasa? What did the Arian clergy do? What death did Huneric die? Who reigned after him? How did Gontemond treat Christians? What happened in the year 493? Can you relate any thing interesting of Epiphanius? What interesting circumstances can you relate of Clovis and Clotilda? What did Gontemond, the Vandal, do in 494?

THE END.



JUN 3 1934



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Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2005

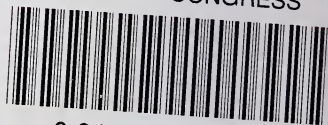
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